

September 2, 2011

Delta Protection Commission
14215 River Road
P.O. Box 530
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Dear Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the July 21 draft of the Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

I am a member of the Rio Vista Windsurfing Association, or RVWA, which has more than 400 dues-paying members and is focused on ensuring that the waterways off Sherman Island remain accessible to windsurfers, kiteboarders and paddlers. It's my understanding that one of the key objectives of the economic plan is to "assess the effect of water policy proposals on the recreation and tourism economy" of the Delta.

The draft plan highlights that the Delta is a destination for windsurfers, and that windsurfing could be impacted by key policies in the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan, which is currently under development.

Of particular concern is a passage on Page 156 of the draft sustainability plan, which states that DSC's proposed habitat restoration scenario could end up "reducing or eliminating windsurfer access, creating use restrictions on other forms of boating, eliminating State and county park facilities with access to the river, and restricting shore fishing."

I request that in future versions of the economic plan you provide more specific information regarding which windsurfing spots, including at the Sacramento County-run Sherman Island Public Access Facility, could be impacted by the DSC plan, or other water policy plans that are being developed.

As described in further detail below, board sports enthusiasts who frequent Sherman Island represent a growing boon to the Delta economy. Conversely, actions by the state to limit access to the waterways along Sherman Island would negatively impact this important sector of the Delta's recreation economy.

Page 102 of the plan states: "To the visitor, what defines the Delta? In such a vast and disparate environment, the recreation destination is often a network of smaller recreation locations, each one suited to a different type of activity. To windsurfers, the open and windy waters of the larger channels near Brannan Island and Rio Vista might define the Delta."

I would say, more specifically, that the waters flowing along the western side of Sherman Island are mecca to windsurfers and kiteboarders.

Each year Sherman Island draws to its shores hundreds of windsurfers and kiteboarders from around the Bay Area and the world. Some come for the day, while others literally spend months at Sherman Island trying to take advantage of as much water time as possible. These people constitute a fairly affluent

demographic, have families, and spend good sums of money at local stores and restaurants for dining out, camping supplies, fuel, sports equipment and RV supplies.

They come for the consistently high winds, warm temperatures and a variety of launching sites, all of which create the perfect combination of conditions that windsurfers and kite boarders seek. On days when the wind does not blow, stand-up paddling, or SUP, is becoming a common sight.

The popularity of windsurfing, kite boarding and SUP, and the need for additional accommodations, are exemplified at the county's Sherman Island Public Access Facility at the end of the Sherman Island Road. It has expanded several times in the last decade and is at capacity almost every weekend and many weekdays in the late spring and summer (see stats below).

I urge the Commission-and state agencies in general-to look at Sherman Island and the incredible opportunity it represents.

By maintaining and adding new amenities (i.e. launch sites, camping spaces, showers at the county park) you will not only provide the growing number of people who come to the island with a safer, more enjoyable experience, you will also be helping to ensure that healthful, environmentally-friendly sports flourish on the island, and pumping money into the local economy.

Windsurfers and kite boarders literally fill the day use parking and overnight camping spots at the Sherman Island Public Access Facility, especially from May through August. Over the last three years they generated more than \$240,000 in day use and overnight camping fees:

FY 2007-2008: \$70,292

FY 2008-2009: \$87,297

FY 2009-2010: \$85,350

In FY 2009-10, people camped for 2560 nights at the facility, using approximately 50 spaces. That averages out to 51 days of the camp sites being used to capacity.

New businesses in the area have also evolved and/or are supported by our sports: Rio Viento RV Park; Delta Windsurf Company; Sherman Island Marina; grocery stores, restaurants and gas stations in Rio Vista, Isleton, Brentwood and Oakley. We support ABK windsurfing camps, Kitetopia, Sheldon and all the instruction schools that teach windsurfing and kite boarding.

From a public health perspective, I would also add that any efforts to make the waters off Sherman Island less polluted, and to make crossing and walking along Sherman Island Road safer for pedestrians, would be appreciated.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,
Leora Broydo Vestel
broydo@comcast.net
415-999-4757